pushed to a conclusion, and to have enforced their demands, if necessary, by threats of war. But the representatives of South Carolina did not venture positively to assure Mr. Buchanan that the authorities of their State might not, even while she remained In the Union, attack the United States forts in the harbor of Charleston; they limited themselves to the expression of their " strong convictions " that she would not commit this outrage. Even the continuance of the existing military situation, precarious as it was for the United States authorities, although expressly stated to be the condition of South Carolina keeping the peace,[1] was not held out as affording absolute assurance as to her conduct. Such a communication was on its face a menacing and insulting communication, and the President ought to have told the bearers of it that any attack made upon the forts in Charleston Harbor, before or after the secession of the State of South Carolina, and until the question of the necessity and propriety of withdrawing the United States garrisons from the forts had been at any rate submitted to the proper authorities of the United States, would be resisted without the least hesitation by all the force at his disposal.

Such an answer he might well have made, even if

he had himself believed in the right of Recession;
for the attitude of South Carolina toward the Government which he represented, and disclosed in this memorandum, was undeniably arrogant and hostile.

[1] *'We again reiterated our solemn belief that any change in the theu existing condition of things in Charleston I larhor would, in the excited KtaU; of feeling at home, inevitably precipitate a collision."—"Statement of Messrs. Miles and Keitt; I W. R., 125, 126.